

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated September 15, 2009. Prior to entry of this response, claims 17-36 were pending in the application, with claims 26, 27, 29, and 30 having already been withdrawn from consideration. By way of this response, claims 21, 22, and 31-35 are withdrawn. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Restriction Requirement

Restriction is required between the following patentably distinct inventions:

Group I, claims 17-30 and 36, drawn to a stacking column; and

Group II, claims 31-35, drawn to a method for manufacturing a ratchet lever.

Applicant elects Group I, claims 17-30 and 36, without traverse.

Applicant is further required to elect one of the following species to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable:

Species I: Figs. 1-6;

Species II: Figs. 7-8;

Species III: Figs. 9-10; and

Species IV: Fig. 11.

The Office action notes that the claims are deemed to correspond to the species listed above in the following manner:

Species I: Claims 19-20, 23-25, 28, and 36;

Species II: Claims 21 and 22;

Species III: Claims 26 and 27; and

Species IV: Claims 29 and 30.

Further, the Office action confirms that claims 17 and 18 are generic to the above species. Without agreeing or disagreeing with these assertions, Applicant does not contest them at this time, and reserves the right to assert that other claims are generic and/or to present new generic claims at a future time.

Applicant elects Species I, Figs. 1-6, without traverse.

Claims 19-20, 23-25, 28, and 36 read on the elected species. As this is a species restriction, Applicant reserves the right to rejoin the restricted species upon allowance of a generic claim.

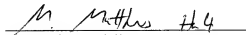
Conclusion

Applicant believes that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this response, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No. 503397.

Respectfully submitted,

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